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CHURCH - PASTOR RELATIONS

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Church-Pastor Relations

I. Introduction

Relationships of love and unity within the Body of Christ grow out of the oneness of all believers in Christ. At times we seem to forget that basic truth. The title of this paper reflects our tendency to dichotomize the body into the congregation and the pastor. It is essential that we recognize that the "church members" and the "pastor" constitute one body. The pastor is as much a part of the body as any other member. Members are distinguished from each other by their gifts and functions. So it is with pastors. Christian qualifications should be common to all members, although pastors, because of their leadership function, should manifest them more evidently.

Relationships Based on the Concept of the Priesthood of All Believers

Our discussion of church-pastor relations should be seen in the content of Eph.4:16 and 1 Peter 4:10-11. The concept of the "clergy" and the "laity" is contrary to the biblical teaching of the priesthood and ministry of all believers and is a root of various problems in church-pastor relations. Each member has free access to God and is called upon to serve Him, and whenever factors prevent or hinder the "proper working of each individual part" relationships are affected adversely. Instead of "the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love", there is deterioration.

It should also be noted that the common calling of all believers allows no room in the body for the expression "we" (the church) excluding "him" (the pastor), for all are members fitted together into one body (the local church).

1. Relationships Based on God's Plan for Leadership

The New Testament teaches that God has a plan for leadership to enable the church to be equipped for growth. This plan is based on healthy relationships, and the proper functioning of the leadership within the Body.

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Relationships of love and unity within the body of Christ grow out of the oneness of all believers in Christ. At times we seem to forget that basic truth. The title of this paper reflects our tendency to abstractize the body into the congregation and the pastor. It is essential that we recognize that the "church members" and the "pastor" consist of one body. The pastor is as much a part of the body as any other member. Members are distinguished from each other by their gifts and functions, not by their status. Christian qualifications should be common to all members, although pastors, because of their leadership function, should manifest them more evidently.

Relationships Based on the Concept of the Priesthood of All Believers

Our discussion of church-pastor relations should be seen in the context of Eph. 4:11-12 and 1 Peter 2:9-11. The concept of the "priesthood" and "equality" is contrary to the biblical teaching of the priesthood and ministry of all believers and is a root of various problems in church-pastor relations. Each member has been called to God and is called upon to serve Him, and whenever factors prevent or hinder the "proper working of each individual part" relationships are affected adversely. Instead of "the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love," there is deterioration.

It should also be noted that the common calling of all believers allows no room in the body for the expression "we" (the church) excluding "him" (the pastor), for all are members filled together into one body (the local church).

I. Relationships Based on God's Plan for Leadership

The New Testament teaches that God has a plan for leadership to enable the church to be equipped for growth. This plan is based on healthy relationships and the proper functioning of the leadership within the body. Theological brethren churches across our continent are hurting today because of a deterioration or a breakdown of relationships. I do not wish to imply that God has a plan whereby a church would be spared all tensions and conflicts, but

currently something is wrong in church-pastor relations in many of our churches. The sad part is that little is being done to resolve the problem. Churches and pastors go their separate ways, both hurting and at times to the point of being unable to fulfill their ministries. What can be done with all the hurts and how can future hurts be prevented?

There are obviously no simple answers, even though we know that reconciliation and forgiveness are God's ways to restoration.

2. Relationship Issues

This paper is an attempt to help us as a brotherhood to face the reality of the problem in Church-pastor relations. This is a very broad area and one of my concern is to narrow it down to a few major issues.

I shall seek to do this by drawing attention to three questions:

1. What are some factors (issues) that cause deterioration in Church-Pastor relation
2. How could these factors (issues) be avoided or resolved?
3. How should the matter of evaluation of the pastor and the decision for continuation or termination of his service be handled in a congregation?

II. Factors that Result in Church-Pastor Relationship Deterioration

It is quite clear from the experience in our churches that there are many factors which contribute to the deterioration of relationships. However, we need to be careful that we do not allow the apparent issues which are the occasion for the breakdown of relationships to loom bigger than the underlying factors.

There appear to be at least three broad areas that need attention before we can seek solutions to the more visible, specific issues.

1. There are problems inherent in our present pastoral system.

It is quite generally agreed that many aspects of our present pastoral system do not have their roots in the New Testament. In the developmental stages of the New Testament churches, pastors (elders) were not appointed by outside leadership, but from within the body of local believers. Today most churches call their pastors from outside their own congregations. This practice is an underlying factor related to some of our problems in church-pastor relations. The responsibility of the congregation to recognize and develop pastoral leadership continues to have a low priority. Until this matter is worked at seriously, we will continue to face

unnecessary difficulties.

A basic problem inherent in our pastoral system lies in the way pastors are called to the local churches. In the first place, there is not enough "home work" done in preparation for the call both by the congregation and the pastor. Often the pastor comes without a mutual understanding of what his assignment is. He moves into the ministry as a "stranger" to the work and to the congregation. However, everybody assumes that everybody knows what the pastor is to do. That is, until the pastor cuts across what some people assumed and then there is conflict. The pastor comes to his assignment with his set of objectives and goals, and seeks to give the church direction accordingly. The church, however, has not identified with these objectives and goals and sees any change of direction as a threat. Relationship tensions result.

And since both the church and the pastor are used to the mobility of pastors, it is no great problem for the pastor to move on to another place. This happens usually before the deterioration of relations has become public knowledge. Both the church and the pastor go on without having their basic problems resolved. As a brotherhood, we have simply allowed this practice to continue and have accepted it as a normal procedure in our pastoral system. And so the cycle keeps repeating itself, leaving unresolved issues and broken relationships to fester.

2. We have deviated from the multiple leadership concept.

Closely related to the above problem is our deviation from the New Testament teaching of the multiple leadership (plurality of elders) principle. Our denomination has gone quickly through a transition from the "lay leaders" to the "one pastor" leadership. Two things happened rather quickly in the transition. The congregation was relieved to have a full-time person who would be expected to assume all responsibility for the ministry and administration. Added to this the church gave the responsibility to the one pastor to incorporate within himself the vision for the entire congregation. The pastor, eager to minister, concurred and thus allowed himself to be placed into an unrealistic and unscriptural role. The congregation, uninvolved, soon sat back and watched the professional fumble in his

a basic problem inherent in our present system is that the way people are related to the total community. In the past there has not been a total work

done in preparation for the shift by the congregation and the pastor. The pastor cannot without a radical understanding of what his assignment is. He

cannot see the ministry as a "paragon" to the world and to the congregation. There is a total responsibility that every one has in the church as to the

totality of the church. The pastor must understand and share in the conflict. The pastor must be in a position to help the congregation and the church

to give the church direction. The church must be identified with these objects and goals and not be a threat to

the church's future.

And since the church and the pastor are seen to be the reality of the church it is no great problem for the pastor to have a total vision. This happens

usually before the church is in a position to have a total vision. Both the church and the pastor are in a position to have a total vision. As

a pastor we have simply allowed the church to continue and have accepted it as a normal experience in our culture. And the church keeps repeating

itself, having answered to the church and looking to ourselves to be seen.

5. We have derived from the total vision

Closest relation to the church is our devotion to the church. Our devotion is a total vision of the church's leadership (spiritual leadership). Our devotion

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task. While the congregation judged the pastor as incompetent, the pastor criticized the people, and particularly the leadership for lack of support, understanding and initiative. The only apparent solution was to resort to the ballot and through a simple tool called the vote of confidence, force a resignation. The pastor and the congregation separate, but the issues are not resolved.

The current trend to multiple full-time pastoral staff called from outside the congregation should not be regarded as the solution to this problem. In fact, it appears to add to the problem. Most churches simply increase the "import" ratio and create inter-staff tensions as well as pastor-church difficulties.

3. The Pastoral role is often misunderstood

Another common problem is the misunderstanding of the meaning of the pastoral ministry. What pastors do between sermons is vague and unclear. Most people know that he is "busy", but they are not really sure what he is busy doing or what his business is. (see exhibit #1 for pastoral assignment). The images people have of pastors is often false and frequently confusing.

One of the main causes of tension is the fact that the role of the pastor is shaped more by the expectations of the people than by biblical, theological, and even historical truths. High expectations are made of the pastor and when he fails to meet these, he disqualifies himself. Added to this is the fact that conflicting demands are made upon him by the congregation. Each person has his expectations and standard of evaluation.

A further matter that causes tensions is the conflicting demands upon the pastor in respect to his style of leadership. Many people do not allow for different styles, and if the pastor does not fit their style, he is unacceptable. The gifts and abilities of the pastors must be given consideration, otherwise wrong expectations will result in criticism and strained relations.

4. Issues that are not dealt with constructively destroy relations.

There is evidence that churches and their pastors allow issues to go unresolved because they have not learned to speak the truth in love. These issues occur so frequently that they merit brief consideration.

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- a. The failure to communicate effectively between the church and the pastor is common to all relationship problems.
- b. The leadership within the body is sometimes weak, unspiritual and unwilling or incompetent to face the surfacing problems. It may appear almost rude to say that the politicking of a few leaders is at times involved. Irresponsible actions and the manouvering of people and events are however, evident within our churches. The tragic evidence is seen in the people hurting in many of our churches.
- c. Small groups (splinter groups), that form a vocal minority, or factious and/ or dominant personalities often gain control. It is sad to note how often church-pastor relations have been disrupted by a small group or a strong individual in the pretext of spirituality. Confrontation between the pastor and the fact-ion has generally proven detrimental. Often the pastor or the leadership has reacted improperly. On the other hand, when no confrontation or communication is taking place, the small group will steadily undermine the ministry of the pastor until he leaves in discouragement.
- d. Resistance to authority is a common characteristic of our society and our churches have fallen prey to the same tendency. This is evidenced particularly where the lines of authority are unclear and communication has been ineffective. Sometimes resistance is rooted in reaction to the democratic process that allows for a majority decision, but has ignored brotherhood consensus.

Closely related to the above is the resistance to change and growth. There is little doubt that many pastors are eager for something better, but they feel trapped by the sterotype of the past, a stereotype which repels them. We cannot ignore the fact that there is pressure in some congregations to impré- sion their pastors in patterns that are no longer functional. While it is true, that this resistance may be due to lack of information and communication, it should not be minimized. The preacher of old must have faced the same problem, for he said, "what has been is what will be, and what has been done

is what will be done; and there is nothing new under the sun". Ecc.1:9 (R.S.V.).

Resistance to authority may also stem from a harsh and condemning spirit of the pastor. Unless the pastor is sensitive he will fail to see the vision and the desire for change and growth that the people have for the church.

e. The pastor's personality, habits, inability to lead leaders and his failure to minister satisfactorily to the total body creates tension. Pastors tend to move ahead independently, assume sole administrative responsibility and exercise authority far beyond their privilege. Their decisions are often based on incorrect assumptions or perceptions. Pastors, in their eagerness to move ahead, will take sides in an issue that can polarize the congregation. While pastors struggle with the development of small groups, they are guilty of allowing themselves to fall prey to a clique. Too frequently the pastor will allow his frustrations, growing out of his imposed role and thwarted plans, to show through in his preaching or reaction to people. Barriers result and relations are broken.

III. Factors that Cause Tensions can be Avoided or Resolved.

All churches and pastors surveyed, agree that the factors that caused a deterioration or breakdown of relations in their experiences could have been avoided or resolved. Possibly the injunction of Romans 14:19 could be more freely applied. "So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another."

How, then, could the factors that cause deterioration of relations be avoided or resolved? The suggestions given below need our consideration and application.

1. We will have to realize that there are in fact inherent problems in our present pastoral system, but that these can be resolved.

Pastors are God's gifts to the church. Every church has pastors. Too often they are not recognized. We have become so accustomed to thinking of pastors as those having been called from elsewhere, that no one within the local body qualifies. The system tends to set pastors apart from the rest because he is an "import". Our congregations should work much more diligently at discerning potential pastors in their midst and at assisting them in the development of their gifts. In the meantime, our

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice. The second part outlines the procedures for handling discrepancies and errors, including the steps to be taken when a mistake is identified. The third part provides a detailed explanation of the accounting cycle, from identifying transactions to preparing financial statements. The final part of the document offers practical advice on how to organize and maintain the accounting system for long-term success.

The following section details the specific steps involved in the accounting process. It begins with the identification of transactions and the recording of these into the journal. This is followed by the posting of entries to the ledger accounts. The next steps involve the preparation of trial balances to ensure the accuracy of the records. The document then describes the process of adjusting entries to account for accruals and deferrals. Finally, it covers the preparation of the financial statements, including the income statement, balance sheet, and statement of cash flows. The text concludes with a summary of the key principles and best practices for effective accounting management.

problem could be minimized if both the pastor and the congregation took more seriously the truth that the pastor is a member of the body as are all other members. He is not the head; he is only a member. As a member, he cannot simply be "gotten rid of" by a vote because a few or even many people disagree with him. Healing within the body must take place. Forgiveness and reconciliation are possible, and can lead to continued ministry.

Pastors have added to the problem of the pastoral system by their mobility. Under normal circumstances a pastor should assume a responsibility in the church without any termination date in mind. The common three year term provides an easy escape when things do not work out as well as expected. The congregation looks upon the pastor's stay as temporary. Seldom, if ever, does the coming of a new pastor resolve the tensions and conflicts within the church. Many of our churches are evidence of that. A well-planned ongoing assessment of the pastor's ministry should be undertaken to avoid the end of the term evaluation.

The arguments that the pastor has "finished" his work" or has "preached his last sermon" are very weak. No shepherd leaves his sheep when he runs out of pasture.

2. We will have to place a stronger emphasis on multiple (plural) leadership and congregational government. Our concept of brotherhood assumes equality of all believers.

The pastoral system has too often placed all leadership responsibility upon one man. Leadership should be distributed and should be accountable to the congregation. Good leadership will draw vision and decision out of the people in the body; it does not act with dictatorial authority.

Preaching should not be reserved for one person. Pastors should overcome the "my pulpit" syndrome. No one person can articulate all that needs to be communicated. Allowing leaders from within the body to preach adds much to a balanced teaching ministry.

Pastors should allow others to lead by stepping aside to give leaders the

right to work independently. The pastor does not have to be "in" or "on top" of everything that needs to be done within the ministry of the body. An important aspect of leadership is influence and this may best be accomplished when the pastor is not the moderator or chairman of a board.

3. The pastoral role (ministry) will have to be explained and demonstrated more accurately. The image of the pastor will have to be changed by the congregation and the pastors. Congregations should undertake a biblical study of this subject.

4. To maintain good church-pastor relations more quality time will have to be spent to establish meaningful communication.

As long as we follow the trend to call people from outside the congregation, very intensive and continuing communication will need to take place between the congregation and the prospective pastor. It is essential that the terms of reference be established and the job description be spelled out before the call is given. The congregation should assess its needs and evaluate the gifts of the potential pastor. This requires open and frequent communication. Churches and prospective pastors should interact in various ways to reveal any "hidden agenda". Often both parties have been frustrated because lack of communication did not allow for an understanding or an agreement on performance expectations prior to engagement. Church and pastor should explore all possible assumptions, exchange views on objectives and goals, and come to a clear mutual agreement.

Frequent dialogue sessions to foster good communication should be an ongoing experience in the leadership. During these times the leadership should speak the truth in love as they share the joys and concerns of the church as well as the strength and weaknesses of the pastor. Pastors must learn to be more vulnerable and accept constructive criticism, especially if it involves the question of their gifts. Areas of neglect and misunderstanding could be resolved before they cause disruption. Pastors will develop and strengthen their relationships with their churches if they follow Christ's example and spend time with those called into leadership.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the success of any business and for the protection of the interests of all parties involved. The document outlines the various methods and systems that can be used to ensure the accuracy and reliability of financial records.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the role of the accounting department in the overall management of the organization. It highlights the need for a strong accounting system that can provide timely and accurate information to management. The document also discusses the importance of maintaining a clear and concise system of accounts and the need for regular audits to ensure the integrity of the financial statements.

3. The third part of the document addresses the issue of budgeting and financial planning. It explains how a well-defined budget can help management to allocate resources effectively and to identify areas where cost savings can be achieved. The document also discusses the importance of monitoring actual performance against the budget and taking corrective action when necessary.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the success of any business and for the protection of the interests of all parties involved. The document outlines the various methods and systems that can be used to ensure the accuracy and reliability of financial records.

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6. The sixth part of the document addresses the issue of budgeting and financial planning. It explains how a well-defined budget can help management to allocate resources effectively and to identify areas where cost savings can be achieved. The document also discusses the importance of monitoring actual performance against the budget and taking corrective action when necessary.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the success of any business and for the protection of the interests of all parties involved. The document outlines the various methods and systems that can be used to ensure the accuracy and reliability of financial records.

8. The eighth part of the document focuses on the role of the accounting department in the overall management of the organization. It highlights the need for a strong accounting system that can provide timely and accurate information to management. The document also discusses the importance of maintaining a clear and concise system of accounts and the need for regular audits to ensure the integrity of the financial statements.

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10. The tenth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the success of any business and for the protection of the interests of all parties involved. The document outlines the various methods and systems that can be used to ensure the accuracy and reliability of financial records.

5. The non-pastoral leadership in the church will need to exercise greater influence. Church-pastor relations have deteriorated where the leadership was not able or willing to give direction or to cope with problems. Criticism and personal attacks on the pastor are too often left unchallenged. Quotes from several pastors bear this out.

"One thing that kept our problem going unresolved was the fact that it was never really openly dealt with face to face on the total leadership level. I as pastor was a go-between between the two groups which formed and was seen as the one to be confronted."

"In my evaluation the problem generally lies with the Church Board, elders or deacons responsible for church-pastor relations. I do believe that in many churches the elders do not fulfill their responsibility.... I believe this is true because many were elected, not because of spiritual maturity and fervour, but because of family ties, economic prestige, etc.... there are major decisions being made by people who are never seen at a Bible Study or prayer meeting, who basically attend Sunday A.M. services and that's it. Yet these are to give the church direction!These are then also called upon to evaluate the work of the pastor. I have real problems accepting the evaluation of someone who I never meet in the prayer meeting."

"I'm not convinced that issues split the pastor and the congregation. I believe that most divisions or conflicts occur because those in leadership positions respond or react to potentially divisive issues improperly and unbiblically."

"The immediate cause for leaving was the politicking of a few in leadership... They obviously ignored the will of the largest part of the congregation and were unreasonable in their demands. This, even after a personal confrontation and discussion of the situation."

Pastors tend to aggravate the lack of strong leadership by assuming the role of sole administrator, rather than equipping others to lead. (The Role of Church Leaders Toward the Pastor - Arthur Flaming, August, 1968).

6. Small (splinter) groups or a strong predominant individual have often had negative influence on Church-pastor relations.

"When in the life of a church, a vocal minority gains control of the church program, problems invariably surface.... and, if this minority is not supportive of the pastor, it is virtually assured that a "parting of the ways" is inevitable and the logical (?) conclusion of such a situation is obvious - the pastor must leave."

The above statement by a lay person is too typical to ignore. The pastor must in these situations demonstrate grace and love and an extra measure of endurance. Leaving the situation may resolve nothing. Here again the role of the non-pastoral leadership is so very significant. Arthur Flaming deals with this when he writes,

The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population.

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The tenth part of the report deals with the bibliography of the report and the position of the various groups of the population.

"First, lay leaders need to be reminded that the New Testament concept of brotherly love implies that they stand by their pastor not only in times of tension due to criticism, but that they also support him in time of acceptance and love. If the pastor reveals areas of weakness, they should point these out to him and counsel with him. They are his brethren.

Secondly, the elected lay leader has a dual role: an obligation to the pastor and a responsibility toward his brethren in the congregation. How should the leader react when members of the congregation criticize the pastor? What should he do when people say that the pastor no longer is a blessing to them? What should he say when they show signs they want a change? What is the responsibility of the leader to a complaining member?

The maturity of the leader is evident at this point if he ministers to the complaining member and becomes his "Brother". Questions he must raise at this point are: "How can we help our pastor?" "What do you suggest that we do?" "Would you be willing to have me make an appointment for us to meet with the pastor and discuss this with him?" "What do you expect of the pastor?" "What do you think his role is?"

People often want a change of pastors when they get dissatisfied. A change of pastor is not always necessary in such a case. In many instances, the people who complain about their pastor are the same ones who complained about his predecessor. In such a case the church leader should minister to the complaining member. This will take time, courage, prayer, and more time."

7. The lack of the manifestation of love is often the underlying problem in broken relationships.

On the eve of His crucifixion, Christ gathered the twelve in the upper room where He celebrated the Passover, instituted the Lord's Supper, washed their feet, and gave them a new commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you..." Then He added, "...by this shall all men know that you are my disciples..." The relationship between the pastor and the leaders should manifest such love. It is a wise pastor who gives priority to the nature of a loving, caring, supportive relationship between himself and those with whom he serves.

That relationship must begin in the official leadership meeting. There the pastor demonstrates whether he is a dictator or friend and servant, whether he thinks of himself as a member of a team of leaders or the head of a corporation that is supposed to run according to his plans. The pastor should listen much more than he talks, and should avoid manipulative practices, trusting the Spirit of God to guide the body in the will of God.

Together the leaders (including the pastor), with the body, should seek the

The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the position of the various groups. It is a very interesting and well-written study of the social and economic conditions of the country.

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mind of Christ, which is more likely to be expressed through consensus than through a simple majority.

This does not mean that the pastor should not have ideas about which way things should go. But his influence should come through the love relationship that has been nurtured through frequent interaction.

IV. Pastoral Evaluation and Decision for Continuation or Termination of Service

"Evaluating a pastor's ministry is no easy task but for several reasons, it must be done, by the pastor himself as well as by others", is the stated opinion of John H. Redekop. I tend to agree with this position.

Most pastors and other church leaders believe that evaluation should be an on-going process. An openness among leaders to talk about church-pastor relations and the pastor's ministry should result in course corrections without any great stir or unsettling experience.

How, then, should the matter of evaluation of the pastor and the decision for continuation or termination of his service in a local congregation be handled? This question is of concern to the congregation and to the pastor. Somehow we have not learned to handle this matter. As a consequence, there are many churches and pastors who are hurting.

With the rise of salaried Pastors in our brotherhood, there also came the vote of confidence by the membership to determine continuation or termination of service.

"This method... places insufficient emphasis on the call of God to the minister.. It is frequently a 'shortcut' to terminating a pastor-church relationship when problems arise... with insufficient opportunity for the redemptive work of the brotherhood to bring healing." (Faith and Life Commission U.S.A. Conf.)

Harold Jantz suggests the following approach:

"Pastors will be helped if their ministry has built into it the principle of regular review. Such a review should normally take place annually within the church council and should include discussion which the council can have in the absence of the pastor. The council should then communicate the concerns and approval of the council to the pastor and open the way for discussion of the same with him. There should be a clear understanding between pastor and council of the extent of the review, defined in terms of the assignment originally given and the goals agreed upon between church and pastor. Such a review might contain the following elements: pulpit ministry, outreach, care of members, conduct of services, administration and relationship to members. Great care should be exercised that evaluation is done in a spirit of Christian love. At the same time, helpful evaluation should convey to a pastor how effectively his ministry is being exercised where it might be strengthened and, if necessary, when

it should be ended. He should be made aware of the strengths the congregation and council see in him, as well as areas that appear to need strengthening and how the strengthening might happen.

If the council does its work well, a confidence vote should not be necessary. The Council should alert the pastor to problem areas that can be changed or advise him when indications within a congregation suggest a conclusion to a ministry might be advisable. A confidence vote may be called for if a pastor or council consider it desirable for a mandate to move forward in a particular direction. However, it should not be considered necessary or a regular practice. The congregation, on the other hand, should have the right to request a vote if it should feel the council is not acting in the congregations' interests."

John H. Redekop, in a paper Should a Pastor Stay or Leave? Who Decides and How? suggests five different ways of handling evaluation:

1. Self-evaluation and discussion with leaders.
2. Self-evaluation in conjunction with a select group.
3. Vote by leadership group.
4. Congregational evaluation with subsequent leadership interaction.
5. Congregation vote.

Self-Evaluation in conjunction with a select group.

"This approach, suggested by Loren B. Mead, again centres largely on pastoral self-evaluation but differs from the above in that the pastor at no stage functions alone.

As the time for evaluation, i.e. contract renewal or non-renewal, approaches, the pastor selects "someone he trusts to act as a personal consultant during the process, someone who may provide emotional support and intellectual balance". It is best if the consultant is not someone who works closely with the pastor in the church setting. Thereafter, the pastor and his consultant select (approximately) six individuals (Mead suggests three clergy associates and three laymen) to complete a suitable evaluation form. The respondents, while carefully chosen because of their competence, knowledge, and perceptive skills, respond anonymously. The pastor also completes the evaluation form. The pastor and his consultant then go over the data very carefully. The consultant, whose integrity and objectivity must be unquestioned by the pastor, helps the pastor to understand and interpret the findings, especially where the pastor's response differs widely from the average response of the others. The pastor and the consultant then decide what needs to be done to remedy areas of weakness, what changes should be made in the pastor's job description and perhaps in the church's expectations concerning the pastor, and pass on specific requests to the appropriate church board. If the evaluation procedure has pointed to numerous and serious problem areas, then the consultant and the pastor might jointly inform the appropriate board that the pastor should probably leave the church or perhaps even leave the ministry entirely.

Given the intensive, though greatly circumscribed nature of the evaluation, the board, and presumably after that the congregation if the board feels thus inclined, will go along with the consultant-pastor recommendation.

Congregational evaluation with subsequent leadership interaction

The congregation plays a central role in this approach. Assuming that the pastor is willing to consider continuation, the church members are asked to complete an evaluation form.... There is nothing necessarily binding about the information gathered but it serves as the major input for subsequent discussion involving the pastor and the Church Council or Board of Elders, etc. Of course, a heavily negative response would precipitate termination but otherwise the final decision grows largely

out of the discussion of pastor with leaders concerning the congregational feedback.

A major advantage of this approach is that the entire congregation is involved in the evaluation but the decision does not rest simply on a mathematical tabulation of support or non-support. The usual reporting of the statistical results to the congregation, and the ensuing publicity, may be seen as a disadvantage."

Modifications of either of these methods could be worked out according to the needs of the local situation.

Arthur Flaming takes the following approach:

"The vote of confidence needs some clarification in our conference and church procedures. The alternative to this vote of confidence could be the following procedure: The members of the church council should ascertain the pulse of the church regarding the pastor-church relationship. If and when the members of the church council sense that the pastor should terminate his duties as pastor, they should advise him to leave within a given time, perhaps a year. No vote of confidence should be taken by the congregation. If the council feels and agrees that the pastor should continue to serve, they should bring a recommendation to the church that he be asked to serve another term."

I present the above approaches because I do not see this paper as an attempt to bring about a uniform pattern of evaluation, but rather a means to help prevent church pastor relationship breakdowns. Each local congregation should agree which approach to evaluation they desire to follow. This plan should then be part of the working agreement negotiated with the prospective pastor or be mutually agreed upon with the pastor already in service.

Another matter that is often raised has to do with the termination of the pastoral ministry. Should an evaluation ever lead to counselling a pastor to leave the ministry entirely? This is a serious question for it may affect a man's conviction about his call of God. Presently an evaluation or a vote of non-confidence may result in the termination of service and no future call to another church. The failure of the church to be honest with their pastor but a readiness to be open to those with inquiries from other churches about their pastor is contrary to the injunction to 'speak the truth in love.' Open communication, love and wise counsel could lead a brother to a usefulness in some other vocation. The uncertainty and frustration faced by men not called by congregations is not right and pleasing to God.

Obedience to the instruction to the Thessalonians would help greatly in maintaining proper church-pastor relations.

"But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labour among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another." I Thess.5:12,13

Constant reminder of I Peter 5:2,3 would do a great deal to help keep a balance in the relationship God requires.

"Shepherd the flock of God among you, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock." I Peter 5:2,3

May God give us the courage and the humility to exercise love and forgiveness in all our relationships.

Some Assumptions

1. Pastors are servants
 - a. True leadership is really servanthood. Mark 10:42-45.
 - b. God calls pastors to serve His people according to their needs.
2. Pastors are leaders among leaders.
 - a. Leadership in the Church is not centered around one person.
 - b. The church must function under a shared leadership ministry.
3. Pastors are equippers and enablers. Eph. 4:11-12.
 - a. They are called to equip the saints for work.
 - b. They are members of the body who's task it is to help members to mature so that the body will grow.

Some Responsibilities

1. Spiritual Oversight
 - a. Shepherd of the flock of God. I Peter 5:1-4.
 - b. Feed the Church of God. Acts 20:28-32.
2. Pastor, Teacher Ministry
 - a. Equipping the saints for work of serve. Eph.4:11,12.
 - b. Preaching the Word of God. Acts 6:4; 2 Tim.4:12.
 - c. Counselling
 - d. Visiting - Membership, adherents, sick, etc.
 - e. Discipling - 2 Tim.2:2.
3. Prayer Ministry - Acts 6:4.
 - a. Personally
 - b. Stimulate greater participation in prayer through groups, etc.
 - c. Build the family altar.
4. Pastor-Evangelism Ministry
 - a. 2 Timothy 4:5.
 - b. Through personal involvement and example shall set the tone for evangelism in the Church.
 - c. Through whatever means and methods available in keeping with the Word of God, shall encourage and stimulate greater involvement in evangelism.
5. Discipline and exhortation Ministry
 - a. Give guidance in discipline, exhortation and admonition as the situations arise.
 - b. Work with leaders responsible for this ministry.
6. Community Involvement Ministries
 - a. Keep alert to the needs of the community to which the church needs to address itself.
 - b. Relate to the public schools re Christian input.
 - c. Foster denominational and inter-church relationships.
 - d. Communicate with government and community leaders in matters concerning the Church and its ministry.
7. Administrative Responsibility
 - a. Work with appointed church leaders to equip them to assume the overall administrative responsibilities of the church and its ministry.
 - b. Be available to Boards (Committees) for counselling concerning the objectives and goals of the church's ministries.
 - c. Motivate and encourage the body for greater vision for the church and its ministry.

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"Though we recognize that all believers are called to ministry, some are called to special services such as pastor. A call to the pastorate is a call to excellent and rewarding work. It is a call to leadership modeled after the shepherding ministry of Christ.

"The local church needs to recognize its responsibility in the calling, strengthening, and relocation of pastors. The pastor's effectiveness in ministry is just as much the responsibility of the church as the church's well-being is the responsibility of the pastor.

"Generous opportunities need to be provided by the congregation for young men who may be prospective pastors to minister in non-threatening situations so that gifts can be discovered and refined.

"When a church calls a pastor, attention needs to be given to his understanding of the Mennonite Brethren heritage, functioning of the denominational family, and brotherhood loyalties. To insure perseverance and avoid casualties in the pastoral ministry, an evaluative process needs to be adopted by the church and pastor to insure an early and non-threatening warning system through which frequent indications of the pastor's effectiveness are constructively shared. The effectiveness of pastoral ministry should be improved through sharing of work with those having appropriate gifts in team ministry. When pastoral changes are made, care should be exercised in making such transitions without damage or loss of respect to either pastor or congregation .

"Causes of pastors leaving the ministry vary and rest with both congregation and pastor. These are often related to unreasonable expectations.

"Therefore we wish to affirm the following in the spirit of Galatians 6:6.

'Let Him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.'

1. We reaffirm that God has given gifts to the church which need to be discovered, developed, and applied. Broad involvement in ministry is essential so that many can experience the satisfaction and personal growth that comes from rendering meaningful service and so that the local church strengthens its own reservoir of human resource.
2. We recognize that premature termination of ministry is caused by a combination of factors. Congregations and their leaders need to sense areas in which the pastor and his family will be in need of extra support and understanding and respond accordingly.
3. We urge congregations to provide the necessary time and means for the pastor and his wife to be involved in study leaves and opportunities for personal and professional growth.
4. Communication between congregation and pastor requires an ongoing evaluation of a pastor's ministry as well as that of the entire church so that the termination of the pastor's term of service is not a hurtful and destructive experience. Whatever procedure is adopted, to come to that point must not degenerate to an exercise in manipulation or dishonesty. Procedures need to be such that a confidence vote, if used, is only an affirmation of what pastor and congregation already know."

Acknowledgements

This paper has been made possible because Church Leaders and Pastors were willing to share with me their experiences and insights in Church-Pastor relations.

Special thanks goes to Harold Jantz and John Redekop for their helpful counsel and for their papers related to Church-Pastor relations. Credit is also due to Arhtur Flaming who has helped me greatly by the various studies he has done.

Papers and Articles

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|--------------------|---|
| Flaming, Arthur | <u>Pastor-Church Relationships and the Confidence Vote</u> |
| _____ | <u>The Role of Church Leaders Toward the Pastor, Aug, 1968</u> |
| _____ | <u>Why The Vote of Confidence?</u> |
| Halverson, Richard | <u>The Pastor and the Board: Maintaining a Healthy Relationship, 1980</u> |
| Jantz, Harold | <u>Church and Their Pastors, Oct. 1979</u> |
| Redekop, John | <u>Should a Pastor Stay or Leave?</u> |
| | <u>Who Decides and How? June, 1979</u> |

General Observations

This paper has been written because church leaders and members are willing to share with each other their experiences and insights in church-secular relationships.

Special thanks goes to Harold Lewis and John Redkey for their helpful counsel and for their papers related to church-secular relationships. Credit is also due to Arthur Weaver who has helped us greatly by the various studies he has done.

References and Citations

<u>Church-Secular Relationships and the Confidence Vote</u>	Harold Lewis
<u>The Role of Church Leaders Toward the Secular</u>	John Redkey
<u>The Role of Confidence</u>	
<u>The Secular and the Church: Maintaining a Healthy Relationship, 1980</u>	Arthur Weaver
<u>Church and Secular Society, 1970</u>	John Redkey
<u>Should a Pastor Stay at Home?</u>	John Redkey
<u>Who Decides and How? 1970</u>	John Redkey